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In a book which makes political development the central theme, one might wish for fuller treatment of such topics as the part played by party organization in the work of practically adjusting the theoretically separated powers of government in our constitutional system. But, perhaps, of a book of this compass this is asking too much.

CHARLES WORTHEN SPENCER.

*The Writings of John Quincy Adams.* Edited by WORTHINGTON CHAUNCEY FORD. Volume II., 1796-1801. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1913. Pp. xxvi, 531.)

JUST before John Adams succeeded to the presidency, Washington wrote a letter expressing the hope that he would not withhold merited promotion from his son, Mr. John Quincy Adams, for fear of the charge of nepotism. "I give it as my decided opinion", continued the President, "that Mr. Adams is the most valuable public character we have abroad, and that there remains no doubt in my mind that he will prove himself to be the ablest of all our diplomatic corps." The young diplomat—he was not yet thirty years of age—was still at the Hague when this letter was written, for though he had been appointed minister to Portugal, his commission did not reach him until April, 1797. He continued at his post until the following June, an interested observer of the revolutionary movement in the Batavian Republic.

The duties of his office left him ample leisure to study current events and to extend the circle of his acquaintances. His despatches are full of incisive comments on the foreign policy of the Directory and on the probable influence of European politics upon American affairs. The post of minister was full of uncertainties in these troubled times. "Until Mr. Pickering was appointed to the State Department", he wrote, "my letters were scarcely ever answered, and of more than fifty letters that I wrote the receipt not of five was ever acknowledged. With regard to *me* and my mission, it might not be of material consequence; but the case was the same with all the other ministers of the government in Europe." For this apparent neglect, the winds and the waves of the inhospitable Atlantic may have been partly accountable. It is not improbable, too, that some despatches were intercepted. Neutral vessels and their cargoes were never safe. It is open to question whether students of our diplomatic history have taken sufficient account of the imperfect means of communication in this age of sailing vessels.

Adams had no sooner reached London, preparatory to sailing for Lisbon, when he learned of his appointment as minister to Prussia. There were two reasons for this appointment. The treaty made ten years before with Prussia had expired and its renewal was thought desirable, subject to important modifications which Adams was to secure by diplomatic indirection. Besides this ostensible object, the President and his Cabinet had a further consideration in mind. In the uncertainties in which American relations with France were involved, it was

thought desirable to watch "that intriguing, insidious, and convulsed government and people"—to quote Senator Tracy. "It is believed", wrote Tracy to Wolcott, "that John Q. Adams, placed at Berlin, can do us much service, as he is unquestionably the most intelligent, and at the same time most industrious man, we have ever employed in a diplomatic capacity." Adams himself was firmly convinced of the necessity of watching France. Admitting the correctness of Washington's view in general—that we ought to keep clear of European entanglements—he believed, nevertheless, that "even to effect this, constant and early information of the current events and of the political projects in contemplation is no less necessary than if we were directly concerned in them". For this task he fortified himself by an extensive correspondence and by an assiduous reading of Parisian journals. His very infirmity of disposition—a censorious and suspicious attitude of mind toward his contemporaries—served him well in this age of chicanery. If ever a diplomat needed to cultivate the habit of doubting *prima facie* evidence, it was in the days of Sieyès and Talleyrand.

Observation of contemporary politics had convinced Adams that the French Directory meant to revolutionize America, as it had Holland and the lesser states of Europe, with the aid of a discontented domestic faction. The attempt to turn the presidential election of 1796 in favor of Jefferson and the Republicans, he had observed with contempt. He was confident that the temper of the American people was too sound to be affected by such intrigues. His tone became much less optimistic as war with France threatened. Logan's mission caused him much anxiety, because this individual was the agent of a party opposed to the administration. "A regular organized faction negotiating with a foreign power, whether for peace or war, is the mischief." The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions seem to Adams "meant as the tocsin of insurrection". At the same time his faith in the enduring quality of the Union was unshaken. "Things appear to me very far from being ripe for the serious struggle which must, indeed, some day happen between the Ancient Dominion and the Union."

On July 11, 1799, the immediate object of Adams's mission was accomplished by the signing of a treaty of amity and commerce with Prussia. From this time on the cares of office sat lightly upon him. He spent many weeks in travel through Silesia and Saxony; and many an idle hour in the translation of Wieland's *Oberon* and of one of Gentz's essays. The letters descriptive of his journey through Silesia, which were published in Dennie's *Portfolio*, are not included in this edition of his writings. He expressed great interest in his friend Dennie's literary venture. Indeed, as his retirement from diplomatic service seemed near, his thoughts turned again to a literary career. In general, however, the editor has excluded matters of personal interest rather rigorously from this volume, holding no doubt that enough of Adams's intimate life has been revealed in the *Memoirs*.

The reviewer is puzzled to know just why so many interesting letters in this, as in the earlier volume, have been relegated to foot-notes. They seem quite as important as many which have been included in the body of the text. The use of italics to indicate parts of despatches which were originally in cipher has resulted in some confusion, since the editor has not always taken care to note when italics serve this purpose and when they represent underscored passages in the original manuscript. Aside from these slight blemishes, the work of the editor has been well done.

ALLEN JOHNSON.

*The Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, Federalist, 1765-1848.*

By SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON, Ph.D. In two volumes. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1913. Pp. xv, 335; viii, 328.)

THERE need be little hesitation, I think, in greeting Mr. Morison's volumes as one of the most important contributions to American political biography that has lately appeared. In the range and accuracy of its scholarship, the judicial candor of its appraisals, and the general breadth of its historical view the work leaves little to be desired. Mr. Morison, himself a descendant of Otis in the fourth generation, has had access to large collections of family papers hitherto little used, including a number of private collections in the hands of Otis's friends or correspondents. Otis's own letters, principally to his wife, are used freely in the text; those appended to the several chapters, on the other hand, are chiefly those of his correspondents. Quite aside from their significance for Otis's own career, the volumes throw valuable light on the careers of some of his contemporaries, and afford at the same time a striking illustration of the wealth of historical material, still largely in private hands, which must be explored before many an important episode in American history can be fully understood.

To most students of American history Otis is remembered chiefly as a staunch adherent of the Federalist party, as an active promoter of the Alien and Sedition Acts, and as the moving spirit of the Hartford Convention. Of each of these phases of Otis's life Mr. Morison gives an account which is at once detailed and comprehensive. His study of Otis as a Federalist leader supplements and continues Dr. Anson E. Morse's *The Federalist Party in Massachusetts*, which carries the story only to 1800, and it makes clearer than before the relations between Otis and the "Essex Junto", and the grounds which separated him from that knot of high Federalist devotees. In addition, these pages bring out, in an illuminating way, the fundamental connection of Federalism with the dominant social life of Boston and eastern Massachusetts; for it was as true of the party in Massachusetts as it was of the old Whigs in England, that while some men attained to Federalism and a few had it thrust upon them, far the larger number of Federalists of importance